

hai lono

"TO SPREAD THE NEWS"

ANNUAL TRAINING • JUNE 2011 • POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA



Aloha

Sgt. Michael G. Geisler



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CAVALRY SOLDIERS FIRE AWAY

Photos and cutlines by
Spc. Stephanie Cassinos

What they see can save lives.

Cavalry units are often relied upon to execute reconnaissance missions, meaning they are the first troops on-site and sometimes the first to engage unexpected enemy forces and collect intelligence. Usually self-supporting, they must remain flexible due to the nature of their missions. This training will better prepare the Hawaii Army National Guard's 1-299 Cavalry Regiment for its upcoming deployment, slated for 2013.

**"You should always
have a Plan C."**

- Sgt. 1st Class Ferdinand Penaflor
Platoon Sergeant,
Bravo Troop, 1-299 Cavalry



Sgt. Tim Sapanara, a gunner with Hawaii Army National Guard's Bravo Troop, 1-299 Cavalry, prepares a belt of .50 Caliber ammunition to be locked and loaded during the unit's annual training at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii.



(Top) Bravo Troop, 1-299 Cavalry gunner Sgt. Tim Sapanara engages a target during a training exercise. (Above) Staff Sgt. Roger Uganiza, Bravo Troop, 1-299 Cavalry, helps gunner Sgt. Tim Sapanara quickly reload an M2 .50 caliber machine gun.

H₂O purification

Photos and cutlines by Staff Sgt. Theresa Gualdarama

On a hot June day in Kona, Alpha Company, 29th Brigade Support Battalion's water treatment specialists are doing what they were trained to do: purify water. Sgt. Kallen Brown, Spc. George Jackson and Spc. Kirstin Bihag utilize the Tactical Water Purification System (TWPS) to produce drinking water for the 29th BSB, 29th BSTB, 299th Cavalry and 487th Field Artillery Regiment during annual training at Pohakuloa Training Area. This system utilizes a micro-filtration tool to filter out deposit and natural substances and includes advanced high-salt rejection and reverse osmosis technology to produce drinking water from the most extreme water sources worldwide.



(Left) Spc. Kirstin Bihag, a water treatment specialist with Company A, 29th Brigade Support Battalion releases excess water out of a diesel water pump as part of the water treatment process on Kona Docks, Hawaii.



Water treatment specialists Sgt. Kallen Brown, Spc. George Jackson and Spc. Kirstin Bihag with Company A, 29th Brigade Support Battalion check valves and pipes of the Tactical Water Purification System (TWPS) near the Kona docks.

Brothers in Arms

Brothers in arms.

A military phrase used in reference to the bond forged as servicemembers fight and train alongside each other.

However, for Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Shiraishi and Staff Sgt. Cory Shiraishi, their brotherhood runs deeper, as they are not only brothers in arms, but brothers in blood.

*Story and photo by
Cpl. Barbara J. Liau*

In addition to being identical twins, the Shiraishi brothers have the same civilian job as police officers for the Hawaii Police Department, and the same job in the military as cannon crewmembers in Alpha Battery, 1-487th Field Artillery Regiment.

Cory and Brandon joined the Army 11 years ago at the age of 18. Cory said their father, then a member of Bravo Battery, 1-487th, “forced them to join.”

Brandon said he and Cory took care of each other and did everything together since they were little. This bond of brotherhood has continued throughout two deployments, multiple transfers between firing batteries, and even reenlisting at the same time.

Not only do the brothers look out for each other, they also take care of the Soldiers they lead. Sgt. 1st Class Donevan Hao, a Soldier with the 1-487th and long-time friend of the Shiraishi brothers, said Cory and Brandon

take many of the new Soldiers under their wing, welcoming them to the battery and imparting their extensive field artillery knowledge to them.

Sgt. Ryan Langas, a cannon crewmember in Cory’s gun section, is a prime example of this.

“They were the first guys I met,” said Langas, who was also recruited by the Shiraishis’ father in 2001. Under Cory and Brandon’s mentorship over the years, Langas refined his artillery skills. He also said whenever he had a question, even if it didn’t have to do with artillery, one of the brothers knew the answer.

Smart and knowledgeable, the Shiraishi brothers quickly moved up in rank. Their ability to pick up new skills and take leadership roles assisted the 1-487th

when they deployed to Kuwait in 2004 for force operations support and to Iraq in 2008 for convoy operations, both non-artillery missions.

“It doesn’t matter if you put them in artillery or convoy security,” said Hao, “They are able to take a leadership role and take charge of everything.”

Unlike many of the other Soldiers in the 1-487th, Brandon said he and Cory had intensive field artillery training when they first joined the military, shooting 105 mm howitzers every drill and annual training. For the past 10 years, however, the 1-487th has only had two chances to train with the 105 mm howitzers. This is a big difference for when the 1-487th used to go to Schofield and “shoot all the time,” he said.

This artillery knowledge and their leadership ability assets to not just the firing battery, but the entire battalion, said Hao. If the Shiraishi brothers were to leave the military, a possibility since their military contracts end in a few months, the battery would feel that effect.

Though there are many personal reasons for reenlisting or leaving the military, one brother’s decision would influence the other. In fact, past reenlistment choices for Brandon were largely dependant on his brother’s decision to stay in the military.

As their decision to reenlist draws closer, the Shiraishi brothers are faced with the choice of whether to remain in the military as brothers in arms, or simply be brothers in blood.



Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Shiraishi and Staff Sgt. Cory Shiraishi of Alpha Battery, 1-487th Field Artillery Regiment stand in front of a 105 mm howitzer at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii, June 6. Brandon conducts site reconnaissance so the howitzers can move into firing position, and Cory is the section chief for gun number six. Both brothers have been in the 1-487th for 11 years.

RANGE 9

**Story and Photos by
Staff Sgt. Jamieson Pond**

One of a Sapper's favorite phrases is 'Fire in the hole!' So it is an understatement to say it has been a good week for the Sapper platoon of Alpha Company, 29th Brigade Special Troops Battalion (BSTB) while it conduct its annual training at Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA), Hawaii.

The engineer Soldiers of Alpha Company are getting a chance to practice their skills that range from the most basic demolition undertaking, like prepping C4 explosives, all the way up to more advanced demolition skills including practicing counter-mobility and door breaching techniques.

Demolition training at PTA spans three days with more than 300 pounds of C4 explosive being detonated, and 220 pounds of it detonated in a single day.

"We build it and then blow it," said 2nd Lt. John Dunn Jr., a recent graduate

of the Sapper Leader Course and the 1st platoon's platoon leader with Alpha Company, 29th BSTB. That, in a nutshell, is what the engineers are doing while training at PTA for their tentative deployment to Afghanistan in 2013.

There are three main areas of the engineers' job that Alpha Company will be training on: mobility, counter-mobility and survivability. The first two involve using demolition.

The first day utilizing explosives begins at PTA's Range 9 with mobility training.

"The mobility part of our training teaches us how to get through any obstacle we come across so that we can keep going with the mission," explained Dunn. "We have set up a triple-standard of concertina wire that simulates a real world obstacle. We go in there with a Bangalore Torpedo and blow a path through the obstacle. The Bangalore will blow a path large enough to drive a vehicle through."

By late afternoon Alpha Company is ready to move on to counter-mobility training. "Counter-mobility is when we create obstacles to limit the movement of enemy forces. We can do this by using shape charges and cratering charges to create large obstacles that make enemy movement very difficult," said Dunn. "We can make obstacles large enough to deter a tank."

It's important to the engineer company to let every troop, from the brand new soldier straight out of initial training to the more experienced soldier, to get a chance to gain some experience with the explosives. "We are trying to get everyone to handle the demo," said Sgt. Paul Kainoa, the supply sergeant for Alpha Company, 29th BSTB. "We like to take the newer guys who are not as seasoned and build up their confidence. We want to get them comfortable with their calculations."

The engineer training is not just about blowing stuff up, there are also important

soldier skills that are being integrated into the demolition range.

"You have to remember that there are people out there who want to harm you. You need to pop smoke to give yourself concealment and quickly move forward, plant the demo and quickly move out," Dunn said to his platoon before moving forward to place

the Bangalore Torpedo.

The benefit of training at PTA is the freedom to train with far more demolition.

"The important part of doing demo is location, location, location," said Kainoa. "Here at PTA we don't have as many limitations compared to Schofield Barracks. At Schofield we can only detonate two pounds of C4 in a single detonation. Here we can detonate 50 pounds."

"This is the first time in nearly 10 years that we have been up here at PTA doing this," said Sgt. 1st Class Angel Aponte, an engineer with Alpha Company, 29th BSTB. "This is a great opportunity for these soldiers."

Spc. Anthony Silva, who has been with

the unit for six years but has never been to PTA was excited to train.

"We're actually doing everything I've wanted to do. AIT (Advanced Individual Training) was the last time we did this and that was a long time ago. We're actually doing our MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) training, which is great," he said.

When it comes to explosives and engineers there is no such thing as wasted demolition. As Dunn pointed out, "the key when you are a Sapper platoon is to utilize all the demo."

Judging from the gaping holes in the ground and the smiles on the engineer's faces, they accomplished their mission.

(Bottom left) BSTB Soldiers prepare a Torpedo Bangalore for a mobility training exercise. (Below) Soldiers with Alpha Company, 29th Brigade Special Troops Battalion (BSTB) practice door breaching techniques with explosives during their annual training at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii. (Right) Sgt. Paul Kainoa, the supply sergeant for A Co., 29th BSTB, looks over his supply list of all the explosives he has signed for to ensure nothing is missing.



Fire in the Hole!

Photos and cutlines by Cpl. Barbara J. Liau

Marines and Soldiers came together to do what they love best: blowing things up. As part of a joint training exercise June 9 at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii, combat engineers from Alpha Company, 29th Brigade Special Troops Battalion (BSTB), Hawaii Army National Guard, and combat engineers from the Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS) 171 based out of Iwakuni, Japan, worked together to practice their demolition skills. They tested new entryway breaching equipment, such as the M100 grenade rifle entry munition (shown below), and practiced setting different types of charges. Marine Cpl. Mitchell Hartman described the experience as “awesome,” and something he would do again.



(Left) A charge used by combat engineers to create craters and rough terrain to deter enemy vehicles. (Above) Marine Gunner Sgt. Bernie Camarillo shoots a round from the M100. Camarillo is the staff noncommissioned officer in charge of the combat engineers in the Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS 171). (Bottom left) A Soldier hits his target with a shot from the M100. (Bottom right) The M100 is used to breach doorways and is fired at a range from 15 to 40 meters.



SOS SERVING OUR SOLDIERS

Evergreen Helicopter, inc. provides medical support

“To relive the experience with the military brings back a lot of memories.”

- Dan Grossman
Evergreen Pilot

Story by Sgt. Katie Gray
Photos by Cpl. Barbara J. Liao

If Soldiers should find themselves in an emergency situation, chances are they will end up face-to-face with Michael Steinback or one of his colleagues. Steinback, a systems operator and retired Coast Guardsman working with Evergreen Helicopters, Inc. (EHI), provides emergency medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) to Hawaii military personnel. Evergreen has been supporting military personnel since 2007. Originally, the 25th Infantry Division provided free MEDEVAC services to Oahu, but when that helicopter unit deployed to Iraq in 2006, state officials needed to find a replacement and awarded Evergreen the contract.

The crew on the aircraft is a partnership between Evergreen, which provides the pilots, and a second company, Priority One Air Rescue, which provides the medics and system operator. Together, they provide 24-hour MEDEVAC support to military personnel on Oahu and Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA) on the Big Island.

Personnel of Evergreen and Priority Air are professionals with flight, rescue or medical experience. Many are prior military or civil service personnel and now use those skills in their current rescue operations.

A full crew consists of a systems operator or crew chief, a paramedic, an emergency medical technician and two pilots. In the case of steep or uneven terrain, the crew does not need to land in order to reach casualties; a hoist can lower a medic to the site. From there they load the casualty to a basket and then both are hoisted back into the aircraft.



Soldiers and Evergreen personnel conduct an after-action review following a training mission. The Soldiers worked with Evergreen personnel to practice calling in a nine-line medical evacuation, and loading a casualty onto a helicopter.

The aircraft typically used by Evergreen in evacuations is the Bell 412EP, a twin-engine helicopter. It has a max capacity of 11,900 pounds, prompting Robert Hempel, a Vietnam veteran and pilot of the aircraft, to describe it as a “Huey on steroids.”

In addition to rescue missions, the crew can be called upon to conduct fire support missions.

Equipped with a fire bucket and sent by range control, they can douse flames from the air with 250 gallons of water.

Evergreen enjoys training and educating Soldiers and Marines said Robert Hironaka, a systems operator and former Big Island police officer. They had one such experience with Hawaii

Army National Guard Soldiers of Charlie Company, 29th Brigade Support Battalion where they conducted exercises to train their medics at PTA. During the unit’s annual training, medics simulated a scenario with two injured Soldiers, calling in a MEDEVAC and then meeting the Evergreen helicopter at a designated landing zone.

Pilot and Vietnam veteran Dan Grossman said he was surprised at the skill Soldiers displayed when dealing with the helicopter.

Grossman said he enjoyed working with Soldiers of Charlie Company and the 487th and “to relive the experience with the military brings back a lot of memories ... I love it.”



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(Left) Hawaii Army National Guard Soldiers from both the 1-487th Field Artillery Regiment practice an emergency medical evacuation with personnel from Evergreen Helicopters.

THE LONE SAPPER

**Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Jamieson Pond**

There is just one Soldier who merits the privilege to wear the Sapper tab within the Hawaii's entire 29th Brigade Special Troops Battalion (BSTB) and that person is 2nd Lt. John Dunn Jr., the platoon leader for 1st platoon with Alpha Company, 29th BSTB.

A Sapper is considered an elite combat engineer and the Sapper tab is not only the most recently authorized tab but also one of only four tabs an Army Soldier can obtain. To earn the privilege of wearing the Sapper tab a Soldier has to complete the 28-day Sapper Leader Course (SLC) at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Roughly 40 percent of all Soldiers entering SLC will earn the right to wear the Sapper tab. Needless to say, this course is no walk in the park.

Sappers are combat engineers who support the front-line infantry and have fought in every war in American history and are possibly best known for the scene in "Saving Private Ryan" where they blow through an obstacle on Omaha Beach on D-Day with a Bangalore Torpedo.

It wasn't until 1985 that the U.S. Army began the first class of SLC and those first graduates had to wait 19 years before the Sapper tab could be worn.

Dunn, who holds a Bachelor's degree in science and engineering, knew from as long as he can remember that he wanted to be an engineer, but it wasn't until later that he started to consider the military.

"I was 28 when I finally made the decision."

"My battalion commander asked if I wanted to go to Sapper school and I said 'Roger that, Sir. Sure.' I didn't even know what Sapper school involved. I started looking more into it and started thinking 'what have I gotten myself into here.' I did a little more research to find out what I would be doing and I fell in love with it."

Sapper school is broken into two phases, each lasting 14 days. The first phase includes general engineering training along with a lot of physical training and class-

room time. The second phase covers basic patrolling techniques and battle drills that emphasize leadership.

"We would wake up, conduct PT and then go straight into the classroom. We would learn about foreign arms, demolition training, identifying types of mines, foreign and domestic, and knot tying."

As Dunn soon discovered, being selected for SLC was one thing, but making it through the course successfully was another battle entirely.

"We started off with 40 guys. Only 29 or 30 passed the course with only 20 of us getting to tab. The instructors told us that was one of the largest classes to get tabbed and it was because a lot of people had come in groups so they were able to encourage each other. The class before us had 35 soldiers and only seven tabbed.

It is possible to pass SLC and not earn the Sapper tab. If a soldier gets less than 800 points they can still pass the course but are not allowed to wear the Sapper tab. To earn the right to wear the tab you have to receive at least 800 points out of a possible 1000. If you don't tab the first time around you can recycle through the course as many times as they will accept you until you tab.

Some things that have stuck in Dunn's memory about Sapper school include a 12-mile ruck-march up a mountain steep enough to touch the ground without leaning over and disassembling an AK-47, naming all the parts and then reassembling it all within two minutes.

"It sounds difficult but once you practice it a few times, it's actually not too bad."

Dunn recalled just how important attention to detail is during Sapper school.

"We had a guy who didn't tab because when he was the platoon leader at the time. He was giving his operation order while we were in an urban patrol base which requires 100 percent security. One guy got caught eating crackers and peanut butter while on



2nd Lt. John Dunn Jr., (center) the 1st platoon platoon leader with Alpha Company, 29th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, speaks with his soldiers about the proper way to wire a 40 pound cratering charge during demolition training at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii.

security and [the platoon leader] didn't tab because of that. The reasoning was that he didn't have full control of his Soldiers."

Sapper school covers a tremendous amount of information in a very limited amount of time and all that information is expected to be retained.

"The hardest part is they feed you with a fire hose and they expect you to regurgitate it back at them in an operational manner. They would tell us that this is what we expect of you and when we see you in the field this is what we better see."

Even with all the challenges Sapper school presented, Dunn still looks back on his time there fondly.

"I'll be honest with you, I had fun in the field," said Dunn. "Nine days straight in the field and you are tired but at that point you have developed some relationships with the guys out there. You've developed a bond and you're looking out for your battle buddy at that point."

While Dunn is the only Soldier in his battalion to wear the coveted Sapper tab, he hopes to soon change that by encouraging his command to create opportunities for other Soldiers to attend SLC.

"A lot of my Soldiers see my Sapper tab and have been asking about what it would take to go to Sapper school, so I've been working with them to make that happen,"

said Dunn. "I tell my guys they need to practice three things: demo, knot tying and PT. If they have those down and can spit out an operations order they are going to be fine."

A leader first, Dunn is enthusiastic about the training he received as a Sapper and takes whatever opportunities available to share his knowledge.

"I enjoy taking people who like doing this stuff but don't know a lot about it and teaching them everything I know. Whatever I can do to help these guys be safe and have fun doing what we do and get better at our jobs; I get a thrill out of that stuff."

Dunn, who is preparing for an upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in 2013 with the

29th BSTB, is looking forward to doing his engineer job. The 29th BSTB has deployed twice in the last 10 years and neither times did they deploy as combat engineers.

"I'm excited about deployment because we're supposed to be moving as an engineer unit which means we'll be doing engineer operations. That's why I'm really focused on this annual training now. We're at the baby crawl phase. It starts with the guys getting to know everything about each other; when they brush their teeth, what kind of deodorant they wear. They need to create that bond and then we can start working together. I'm excited to see what we're capable of out there."

TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY

CAVALRY SOLDIERS TRAIN TO BE SNIPERS

Story and photos by Spc. Stephanie Cassinos

Lying prone in the shrubbery, two Soldiers squint through binoculars as two others await guidance from behind their sniper rifles. Far in the distance, a single white target would be a needle in a haystack to the average person. To these sniper trainees, it is a “target of opportunity.”

Staff Sgt. Cory Soares consults his handbooks and calculator. “You have to take into account light, humidity, angles and wind-speed,” said the Cavalry veteran, now a squad leader of the small, newly selected team of future snipers. “Estimation is the first step, then range, then windage.”

Only four of the 300-plus Soldiers who belong to Hawaii Army National Guard’s 1-299 Cavalry Regiment met the baseline crite-

ria to one day possess the Army’s coveted “Bravo Four Additional Skill Identifier” (i.e. Sniper). In the military world, few are considered to be more technically proficient than those who can deliver a one-shot precision round to take out an enemy threat.

Ask any sniper what his primary mission is and he will reply (most likely verbatim), “To deliver long-range precision rifle-fire to key targets, select targets and targets of opportunity.” Secondary mission: “To collect and report battlefield information.”

“Snipers are the best assets any unit can have,” said Staff Sgt. Spencer Hisatake, instructing the team during their first series of sniper familiarization exercises during the unit’s annual training at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii. Hisatake is a veteran sniper



(Left) Spc. Marvin Woods observes a target during a sniper training exercise. (Opposite page) From left: Spc. Eric Orac, Staff Sgt. Cory Soares, Spc. Marvin Woods and Spc. Cyrus Silva, Charlie Troop, 1-299 Cavalry Regiment, were the only four infantrymen out of the 300-plus Soldiers in their unit to be selected to attend sniper school. This training will enable them to become valuable assets to their unit during its upcoming deployment in 2013.

who first utilized his skills in Desert Storm and now aids in military and police training.

“Let’s say, for example that there is a suicide bomber in the middle of a group of people,” he explained. “[The sniper] can deliver one shot surgically – take out the suicide bomber by placing the shot correctly at the brain stem. Target goes down, all civilians are alive, zero casualties. Now let me ask you this: would you consider that to be a valuable asset?”

Age, rank and politics mean very little when selecting a sniper candidate. In fact, of the four Soldiers selected from the 1-299, all but one are junior enlisted Soldiers.

“It was always something I wanted to do, but I didn’t see it coming,” said newly promoted 18-year-old Spc. Marvin Woods. After only a year and a half in the National Guard, he is now on the path to becoming one of the Army’s most elite.

To Woods, it’s just business as usual as a Soldier. “If it helps anyone around me and helps my unit, it’s part of the game, you know?”

But, as Hisatake remarked, life as a sniper is far less glamorous than it’s depicted in Hollywood productions.

“They have a hard life. They’re out here operating in a two-man team.... no baths, no baby wipes, no

nothing,” he reflected. “If you’re in a hide and the enemy’s close by, you sometimes have to urinate and defecate right where you’re at – in your pants. You have to crawl through sewers. Raw sewage. You have to pull off what you’re meant to pull off.”

“It takes a certain breed of man,” he added.

“They have a hard life.

They’re out operating in a two-man team... it takes a certain breed of man.”

- Staff Sgt. Spencer Hisatake on being a sniper.

Due to the lethal nature of the skills they will acquire, this breed of man must pass high standards of qualification to even be considered for sniper school. Not only do they have to be an expert marksman, extremely physically fit and pass a psychological evaluation, they

also have to score above average on their military aptitude test.

In a nutshell, “they have to be the best infantrymen in the unit.”

The team of four, which includes Soares and Woods as well as Spc. Cyrus Silva and Spc. Eric Oroc leave soon for sniper school. Until then, they will continue to become familiar with their weapons and the methodology, squinting and dry-firing away at the little white spot in the distance.

“I’m very impressed with where they are,” Hisatake confided, looking over his team lying belly-first on the hill. “I’m very confident that these guys get it.”

FIELD ARTILLERY

THE INFANTRY'S BIG BROTHER

Photos and cutlines by Cpl. Barbara J. Liau

"Stand by . . . Fire!" With a thundering boom and an eruption of dust, a high-explosive round (shown below) weighing almost 50 pounds is ejected out of a 105 mm howitzer at a target miles away. Four more projectiles are sent downrange before the call is radioed in, "5 rounds complete." Soldiers from the 1-487th Field Artillery Regiment, Hawaii Army National Guard trained with 105 mm howitzers at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii June 4 -15 for their annual training. "The purpose of the field artillery is to support infantry movement and destroy enemy positions," said Cpt. Carl Hood, commander of Alpha Battery, 1-487th. Although this was the second time in 10 years the 1-487th has fired the howitzers, Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Medeiros, who has been with the 1-487th for over 20 years, says the Soldiers have done "awesome," staying focused and showing their strength. The 1-487th is scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan in 2013.



(Right) A Soldier guides a Humvee towing an 105 mm howitzer to its proper position on the field June 6. This soldier is part of the advance party of Alpha Battery, 1-487th Field Artillery Regiment which conducts site reconnaissance to ensure the howitzers will be in optimum firing position and set up with minimum delay.



**THE PURPOSE OF THE
ARTILLERY IS TO SUPPORT
INFANTRY MOVEMENT AND
DESTROY ENEMY
POSITIONS.**



(Top) Soldiers from Bravo Battery, 1-487th Field Artillery Regiment align one of six 105 mm howitzers as part of a training exercise at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii June 6. The battery has eight minutes to bring all the howitzers into correct position. Each gun requires a minimum of five Soldiers to safely set up and operate the howitzers.



(Right) Sgt. Ryan Langas, a cannon crewmember manning gun number six with Alpha Battery, 1-487th ensures the 105 mm howitzer is on target. A slight adjustment to the gun can make a huge difference to where the round will impact.

ONE SHOT, ONE TEAM

MARINES AND SOLDIERS TRAIN



Story and photos by Spc. Stephanie Cassinos

Four Hawaii Army National Guard Soldiers with Charlie Troop, 1-299 Cavalry Regiment had the opportunity to advance their sniper skills during a joint-training exercise with the Marine Corps' 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines Weapons Company Scout Sniper Platoon.

Staff Sgt. Cory Soares, Spc. Eric Oroc, Spc. Marvin Woods and Spc. Cyrus Silva were recently informed that they had been selected to attend sniper school. Before they ship off, however, they've been given the opportunity to train with some of the Army's and Marine's best to familiarize themselves with their weapons and how to employ them as a sniper.

"They've done outstanding so far," said Lance Cpl. Steven Kane, a scout sniper with the 3/3. "All the instruction that we've given them they've followed to the letter and any questions that they've had they've come right to me right away. I'm very proud to say that they've done so well."

Staff Sgt. Spencer Hisatake, a veteran

sniper who has assisted in training the four Soldiers said he jumped at the opportunity to get the trainees the opportunity to cross-train with the Marines.

"The snipers are a small community regardless of what branch it is. Snipers tend to stick together," explained Hisatake. "The art, the craft, the trade of being a sniper is the same. The math is the same. What we do to get to squeezing that trigger and sending that round down-range is generally the same."

Kane concurred, and said he felt that servicemembers are able to put differences aside when it comes to educating each other.

"There's that stigma sometimes between the Marine Corps and the Army and even other branches, but that goes right out the window with a community like snipers," he said. "We're such a tight-knit community and we can always learn from each other and the different type of trainings that we get. Every branch is going to have a difference in how they operate, but just learning those different things, those different nuances, that's really going to help provide the future for snipers in the military as a whole."

While each branch has its differences, Hisatake said he felt that the changing battlefield has helped the sniper community draw even closer together.

"I think ever since 9/11 the branches have actually integrated themselves and are doing so many more joint operations. The relationships between branches and components have grown so much that we've compared notes and everyone's really on the same page," said Hisatake. "Working with the scout snipers, some of the world's best snipers out here in the game, we're generally right on the same page. We use a little different terminology but other than that it's the same information and the same way to get there."

While each branch has its differences, it's those different methods of operation that help a sniper become the best possible asset he can be.

"We take what we can from everyone and we put it all together and we try to make the best product possible," said Kane. "No matter if that's in the Army or the Marine Corps."



“We’re such a tight-knit community and we can always learn from each other.”
- Lance Cpl. Steven Kane,
Marine Scout Sniper



(Opposite page) A shell discharges as Staff Sgt. Cory Soares fires live ammunition for the first time from his long-range sniper rifle. Soares, the squad leader of a new four-man team, will soon attend sniper school

(Above)Spc. Cyrus Silva fires live ammunition for the first time from his long-range sniper rifle during a joint training exercise with the Marine Corps' Scout Sniper Platoon with the 3rd Marines Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion.

(Left) Lance Cpl. Steven Kane, a scout sniper with the Marine Corp's 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines Weapons Company instructs Army Spc. Eric Oroc and Staff Sgt. Cory Soares during a joint training exercise.



Employers support Soldiers during annual training 2011



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jamieson Pond

Civilian employers of Hawaii Army National Guard Soldiers visited their employees during a visit to Pohakuloa Training Area as part of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) program June 8. The five employers represented four businesses which included Kaiser Permanente, Cross Fit, Domino's Pizza and Aston Waikiki Beach Tower. ESGR recognizes outstanding support, increases awareness of the law, and resolves conflict through mediation. From left to right: Sgt. Maj. Graig Ynigues, John Connolly, 2nd Lt. Kristine Sonido, Bryant Powers, Mike Tasaka, Lt. Col. Paul Tamaribuchi, Mike Rompel, Yvette Coleman, Sgt. Steve Sili, Lt. Col. (Ret.), Howard Sugai, Kitt Maggert and Lt. Col. Martin Moerschell.

Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii - Five civilian employers of Hawaii Army National Guard Soldiers got a chance to see what their employees do during their annual training June 8, as a part of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) program.

The five employers were flown on a military aircraft from the island of Oahu to Hilo, Hawaii and then traveled to Pohakuloa

Training Area so they could see first-hand what their employees do when they take off their civilian hat and don their military uniform.

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The five employers represent four different businesses which include Kaiser Permanente, Cross Fit, Domino's Pizza and Aston Waikiki Beach Tower.

